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Major News Releases and Speeches

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News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

CCC DONATES 11.4 MILLION POUNDS OF DAIRY PRODUCTS FOR USE IN MEXICO

WASHINGTON, Sept. 6—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation has donated 11.4 million pounds of surplus dairy products to two nonprofit charitable organizations for distribution to needy persons in Mexico. The total includes 8.205 million pounds of nonfat dry milk, 2.425 million pounds of butteroil and 735,000 pounds of cheese.

Catholic Relief Services will distribute 7.245 million pounds of nonfat dry milk, 2.425 million pounds of butteroil and 495,000 pounds of cheese to persons living in areas which are particularly affected by the drought and poor economic conditions.

Friends of Our Little Brothers will distribute 960,000 pounds of nonfat dry milk and 240,000 pounds of cheese to orphans.

These two agreements—the last to be handled by USDA under Section 416 of the Agricultural Act of 1949—bring to 20 the number of programs implemented this year. Donations under the 20 programs total 87,827 tons of dairy products.

Future Section 416 foreign dairy donations will be handled by the Agency for International Development.

Section 416 was amended recently to allow CCC to donate its surplus dairy products to needy people overseas. This legislation also authorizes donations to needy Americans.

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USDA ISSUES FINAL RULES ON BURLEY AND FLUE-CURED TOBACCO MARKETING QUOTAS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued final rules to implement legislation which requires persons (but not individuals) who are not significantly involved in the management or use of land for agricultural purposes to either sell or

forfeit their burley or flue-cured tobacco acreage allotments and marketing quotas.

According to Everett Rank, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, the term "persons" includes governmental entities, public utilities, educational institutions, religious institutions, partnerships, corporations, estates, and trusts. The requirement to sell or forfeit does not apply to an individual who owns a farm having a burley or flue-cured acreage allotment and marketing quota, he said.

Persons who must sell their allotments and quotas to prevent forfeiture must do so by Dec. 1, 1983, or Dec. 1 of the year after the year in which the farm is acquired, whichever is later. If the quota is not sold by the applicable date, the person shall forfeit the quota to the county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committee, he said.

The rules also set down guidelines for county ASC Committees to determine whether such a person is "significantly involved" and establish provisions concerning forfeiture of allotments and quotas, Rank said.

A primary requirement for determining significant involvement is that the person's total gross income from the management or use of land for agricultural purposes during the three preceding years is more than 20 percent of the person's total gross income during the same period. The rules specify that required sales may be made only to producers who are or will become active burley or flue-cured tobacco producers within the same county.

The rules are scheduled to appear in the Sept. 8 Federal Register. Copies also will be available in county offices of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service soon afterward.

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AMERICAN, DELTA AIRLINES FINED IN SETTLEMENT OF ANIMAL WELFARE CHARGES

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8—American Airlines has agreed to pay a \$2,000 fine and Delta Airlines a \$500 fine in settlement of charges of

violating transportation standards of the Animal Welfare Act, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

Dr. Richard L. Rissler, the veterinarian who directs animal care activities for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said the payment by American settles a nine-count charge brought against the airline in connection with shipping live animals under substandard conditions.

He said the most serious incident involved a cat that died in transit from St. Louis, Mo., to Boston, Mass., of exposure to freezing temperatures, Dec. 20, 1980.

The other reported violations by American involved dog and monkey shipments. The specific allegations are that: On two occasions in 1981, seven dogs were shipped in undersized crates from Los Angeles to Honolulu. A shipment of monkeys from Tucson, Ariz., arrived at Dulles International Airport near Washington, D.C., in poorly ventilated crates. Also, the crates had an insufficient quantity of litter and lacked rims or other devices to prevent obstruction of ventilation openings. There was no labeling to indicate "live" or "wild animals" or the correct upright position, and there were no feeding or watering instructions attached to the crates.

Rissler said American, headquartered at Dallas-Fort Worth Airport, Texas, further agreed to educate its employees in the regulations and standards of the act, and to take action to assure compliance in its future handling of live animals.

In the case against Delta Airlines, Inc., USDA charged that company employees provided substandard care for a dog they accepted for shipment from Jacksonville, Fla., to Jackson, Miss., on July 23, 1982. The dog, which allegedly was handled improperly in transit, was dead on arrival at Jackson airport. An autopsy attributed death to heat prostration.

Both airlines agreed to waive a hearing and to pay the penalty set by a USDA administrative law judge without admitting or denying the charges.

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NEW USDA PROCESSING SYSTEM WILL INCREASE SURPLUS FOODS TO SCHOOLS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8—Schools and institutions will be able to take greater advantage of surplus foods under a new processing system being used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Assistant Secretary Mary C. Jarratt said today.

The new plan, called the national commodity processing system, will make lower-priced processed foods available to schools and institutions not now able to get them, she said.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service recently approved contracts with several commercial food processors to provide \$5.2 million worth of USDA surplus commodities, mainly dairy products, for use in the manufacture of processed foods. These commodities include process and cheddar cheese, butter, nonfat dry milk and honey for use in federal nutrition assistance programs.

The food processors approved so far are: Pillsbury Co., Minneapolis, Minn.; Better Baked Foods, North East, Pa.; Chi-Chi Foods Ltd., Elk Grove Village, Ill.; Roney Ice Cream Co., Aurora Ill.; Blue Morrow Sales, Inc., Amarillo, Texas; Camino Real Foods, Inc., Vernon, Calif.; Tony's Pizza, Marshall, Minn.; and Sabatasso Foods, Santa Ana, Calif. The companies have requested 3.5 million pounds of cheese, butter oil and non-fat dry milk.

Under the agreements, the processors will convert the surplus foods into items that are easier to use such as cheese pizza, pork patties, cheese and onion enchiladas, beef and bean burritos, milk shakes and taco rollitos. These foods then will be sold to the eligible schools and charitable institutions at lower prices that reflect the value of the donated commodities contained in them.

"Schools and institutions should get a wider variety of products made from the donated commodities. The processors will benefit by increasing their school and institutional sales and the government will be able to reduce its inventory of surplus foods," Jarratt said.

The new system was authorized by the Temporary Emergency Food Distribution Act of 1983, and implementing regulations published in the June 21 Federal Register. Companies interested in participating

should contact Gwena Kay Tibbits, Food Distribution Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, Alexandria, Va. 22302.

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USDA PROPOSES REVISING GRADE STANDARDS FOR CANNED GRAPEFRUIT & ORANGE FOR SALAD

WASHINGTON, Sept. 9—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed revising the U.S. grade standards for canned grapefruit and orange for salad to allow sliced oranges to be used in the product.

USDA invites comments on the proposal until Oct. 10.

Charles Brader, a marketing official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the current grade standards provide only for segmented fruit in the product.

"The proposed change would add sliced oranges or a combination of segmented and sliced oranges," Brader said. "Sliced oranges—also used in packing canned oranges, chilled oranges and chilled citrus salad—are more uniform in size and retain more of the piece intact."

To simplify the grade nomenclature, USDA proposes to eliminate the optional use of "U.S. Fancy" for Grade A and "U.S. Choice" for Grade B.

The proposal will be published in the Sept. 9 Federal Register, available at many public libraries. Written comments should be sent in duplicate to the Hearing Clerk, USDA, Rm. 1077-S, Washington, D.C. 20250, where anyone may see them.

The Agricultural Marketing Service establishes grade standards and provides official grading for many food products. Use of the grading service is voluntary and paid for by the user.

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USDA REVISES GRADE STANDARDS FOR GRAPEFRUIT JUICE

WASHINGTON, Sept. 9—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has revised the U.S. grade standards for grapefruit juice to promote efficient marketing of the product.

Charles Brader, a marketing official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said major sectors of the citrus industry asked USDA to make the changes which become effective Sept. 12.

The revised standards provide more dilution ratios for frozen concentrated grapefruit juice than the previous allowance of three parts water to one part concentrate.

"Some processors of frozen concentrated grapefruit juice market products that have a higher concentration than the three-to-one ratio," Brader said. "Previously those products had to be graded as concentrated grapefruit juice for manufacturing, which did not represent their intended use. Providing additional dilution ratios will promote orderly marketing of these products."

The revised standards change from 9 percent to 10 percent the soluble solids requirement for grapefruit juice from concentrate. Brader said this action aligns the grade standards with the Food and Drug Administration's standards of identity.

Details on the changes will be published in the Sept. 12 Federal Register, available at many public libraries.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service establishes grade standards and provides official grading for many food products. Use of the grading service is voluntary and paid for by the user.

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